

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 4, 2007

Topps Meat Company recalls ground beef nationwide

The Consumer Health Services Division of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture is urging consumers to check their freezers for frozen ground beef products that are a part of a national recall.

The Topps Meat Company, LLC, has voluntarily recalled 21.7 million pounds of frozen ground beef products. These products have been linked to 29 cases of E. coli O157:H7 in several states. The contaminated products were traced to a plant in Elizabeth, NJ.

These ground beef products were produced on various dates between Sept. 25, 2006 and Sept. 25, 2007, and were distributed to retail establishments nationwide. Each package bears the establishment number "Est. 9748" inside the USDA mark of inspection as well as a sell-by date between "SEP 25 07" and "SEP 25 08".

There have not been any cases of E. coli in Wyoming linked to these products, however boxes of one of the recalled products, "3-pound boxes of TOPPS 100% Pure Ground Beef Hamburgers, 12 quarter pounders", were removed from several stores around the state. It is not clear whether other recalled products have been available in Wyoming stores within the past year.

Although the products have been removed from retail stores in Wyoming, health officials want to ensure that products do not remain in homes or food service operations.

"In addition to consumers, it is especially important for retailers, food banks, charitable organizations, child care facilities and other food service operations to be aware of the recall," said Dean Finkenbinder, Manager of the Consumer Health Services Division.

E. coli O157:H7 is a bacterium that can cause kidney failure and even death. More common symptoms include bloody diarrhea, vomiting, chills, fever, muscle aches, fatigue and general malaise. Children, seniors and persons with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness. Individuals who feel ill after handling or accidentally consuming any of the recalled products should seek immediate medical attention.

A complete list of recalled products is available at www.toppsmeat.com.

Recalled products should be disposed of or returned to stores immediately. For more information, contact the company's recall line at 888-734-0451. Consumers may also contact the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at (307) 777-7211.

When cooking ground beef, consumers are urged to use a thermometer to make sure the beef reaches 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Wash hands before and after handling raw beef, and clean and sanitize any surfaces raw beef has touched.

###